



**The ALS Association**  
*National Office*

27001 Agoura Road, Suite 150  
Calabasas Hills, CA 91301-5104  
(818) 880-9007 FAX (818) 880-9006

## Media Release

**Contact:**  
**The ALS Association**  
Gary Wosk  
(818) 587-2241  
[gwosk@alsa-national.org](mailto:gwosk@alsa-national.org)

### **The ALS Association Celebrates the Life of its ‘Grandfather,’ Lawrence R. Barnett, Former President of MCA and General Artists Corp.; He Turns 95 Years Young this Saturday**

CALABASAS HILLS, Calif. (September 11, 2008) – When The ALS Association was formed in 1985, no one could have foreseen how one man could be such a major catalyst in helping turn a relatively unknown non-profit organization into one of the most respected ALS organizations in the world. No one could have imagined, however, what a major force Lawrence R. Barnett would be. His pioneering leadership, financial generosity, vision and personal devotion have made The Association what it is today.

The former president of Music Corporation of America (MCA) and General Artists Corporation set out to create a first-class organization that would improve the quality of life for people living with Lou Gehrig’s Disease. Larry was determined as well that the organization would become a worldwide leader in research which would ultimately find a cure. It was also essential to Larry and his many fellow advocates that the organization become a “second home” to all the men, women and children in this country suffering from the progressive, neurodegenerative disease. They were committed to building an organization that would provide not only superior patient care, but also a comprehensive support system for people with ALS and their families to live fuller lives.

The ALS Association wishes Larry, affectionately known as the “grandfather” of the organization, joy in the celebration of this most 95th birthday. In addition to wishing him the best in health and happiness, The Association hopes that next year’s birthday cake will be even sweeter with the development of major research breakthroughs fostered through his personal support and the 100 worldwide research projects currently being funded by The Association.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the people at The Association and all those at its national network of 42 chapters are considered part of the Barnett family. While most of Larry’s many admirers in the ALS community and at The Association will not be at his party to celebrate with him and his family in person, they will be honoring the longtime Rancho Mirage, Calif., resident for this memorable birthday milestone. They all know how much better the lives of people with ALS are because of his nonstop selfless efforts.

MORE...

“Larry’s 95th birthday is something we can all rejoice in,” said the president and CEO of The Association, Gary A. Leo, who will be attending the party and presenting Larry with a special memento. “The icing on the cake is that he is such a great human being who will always inspire us. It is because of Larry that The ALS Association was able to develop a global, cutting-edge research program that will one day discover a cure for Lou Gehrig's Disease. And it is because of Larry that thousands of families across this nation have turned to and received help from our caring organization.”

On such a glorious day as his birthday, it is impossible to think of Larry without also remembering his late wife, Isabel, a remarkable woman whose passion for defeating ALS equaled his. The Broadway star and her husband, married for more than 50 years, went on to establish the Lawrence and Isabel Barnett Post-Doctoral Fellowship for Research. Larry’s generosity to The Association over the years has included his personal underwriting of numerous research grants, which have been awarded to some of the world’s leading ALS scientists.

One research project he helped fund eventually isolated the gene that causes some forms of ALS.

Larry first became involved in the fight against ALS in 1978 when the wife of a close friend developed the disease. She asked Larry, an experienced fundraiser, to help increase public awareness of ALS and support research and ever since then he has made it his personal mission.

In 1993, The Association presented Larry with the Donald W. Mulder Award for Leadership, Dedication and Achievement. He was the first recipient of the Jacob Javits Lifetime Achievement Award two years later. In addition, in 2006, The Association’s Greater Los Angeles Chapter presented him with its Circle of Life honor for his contributions.

“Larry is the kindest and most generous ‘grandfather’ this or any organization could ever have,” said Allen Finkelstein, the chairman of The Association’s National Board of Trustees. “His contributions to The ALS Association have been many and frequent. He always thinks of others first and that’s just the way he is.”

The ALS Association celebrates the life of one of its founders on his 95th birthday and throughout the year.

###